

Alert Keeps 'Ham' Operators Hopping

JULY 21 1956

The phone on the corner desk gave an insistent jangle and the Civil Defense worker on duty at the CD headquarters picked up the receiver and listened intently.

Occasionally, if the message pertained to this area, he jotted down a message. If the conversation was of no significance to the Evansville program, he quietly hung up the receiver.

The CD headquarters phone is on a "state-wide party line." Whenever a contact is made with the Indianapolis central headquarters, phones throughout the state ring in the CD posts. At every post there is a monitor, keeping track of the calls and making note of information pertinent to this area.

The communications drill is a part of the national civil defense alert, Operation Alert—1956. The alert began yesterday morning, but the Evansville program is concentrated on today.

THROUGH LAST NIGHT and all day today, volunteers from the Tri-State Amateur Radio Society will man the phone at the Evansville Civil Defense headquarters, 1146 Adams Ave. They will answer queries from Indianapolis, asking how many personnel could be counted upon in Evansville in case of a real attack. They will make note of reports in Indianapolis from nearby towns, telling what aid they need. In a real attack, these phone monitors would inform the central office of supplies that would be available in Evansville.

John Harkins, emergency coordinator for the amateur radio operators in Vanderburgh County, was on phone duty at the headquarters last night. He said, he was relaying messages for the central office through the ham radio set-up "just to give them something to do."

Normally, he said, all communication would be done by phone unless lines were down. It's quicker that way.

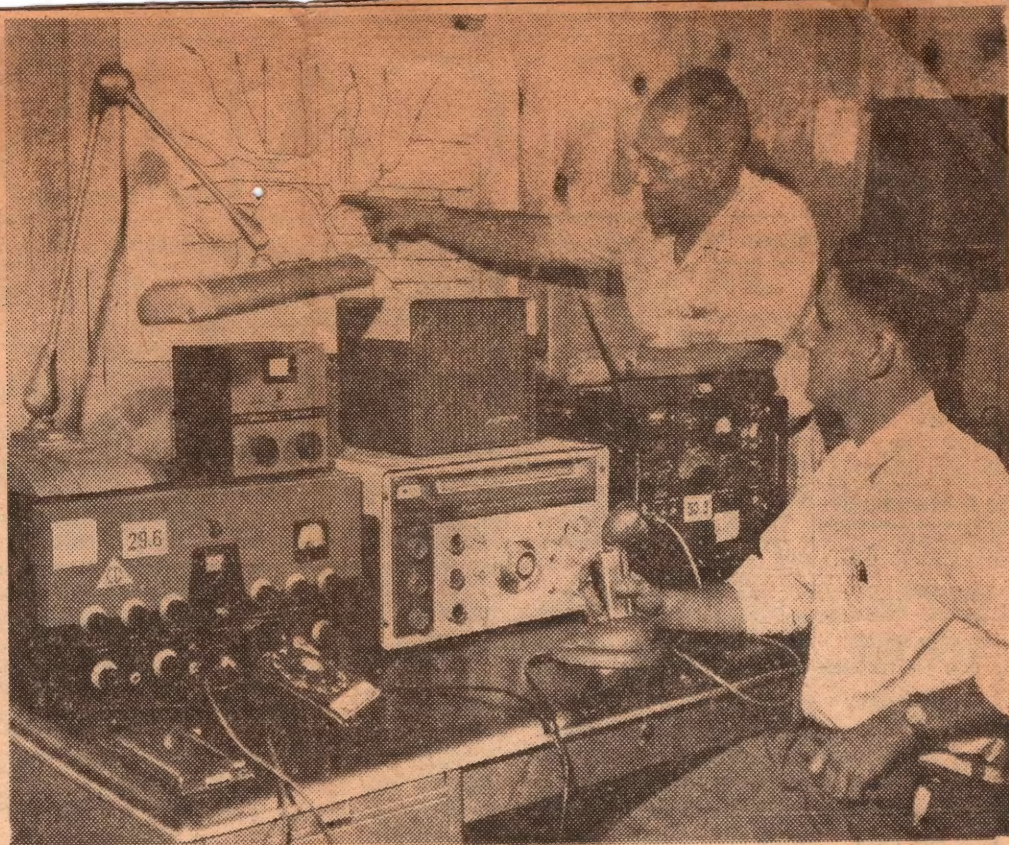
The radio set at the CD headquarters wasn't completely assembled yet early last evening. Harkins had been relaying messages to Indianapolis through the set located at 2232 E. Powell Ave.

Amateur radio volunteers were working on the headquarters set.

"As soon as this set is ready, we'll be able to contact our other station," Al Schoettlin, communications director, said. "We hope to contact Sullivan (Ind.) this evening, too."

TONIGHT ANOTHER radio set will be assembled at the National Guard Armory, where doctors, nurses, clerical personnel, and others will be on hand to demonstrate what would happen in Evansville in case of an atomic attack. Radio operations will also be demonstrated.

Harkins said about 20 ham radio operators in Evansville could be counted upon in any emergency. (Continued on Page 16, Column 5)



Operation Alert---1956: A complete amateur radio set is assembled at the Evansville Civil Defense headquarters. Here Al Schoettlin (standing), communications director, and Ed Spahn, ham radio operator, study a map of Evansville. Both are participating in the national CD alert.

Test Alert

(Continued from Page One)

cy. About 10 of these, he said, have mobile units. These ham operators, he continued, have emergency drills every month.

Schoettlin demonstrated a piece of Civil Defense equipment that would give a nation-wide alert in minutes if it were hooked up. It operates through the telephone system and automatically signals through the phone.

Schoettlin dialed the alarm signal and a shrill blast of the phone bell shook the office. Different signals indicate different warnings from "take cover" to "all clear."

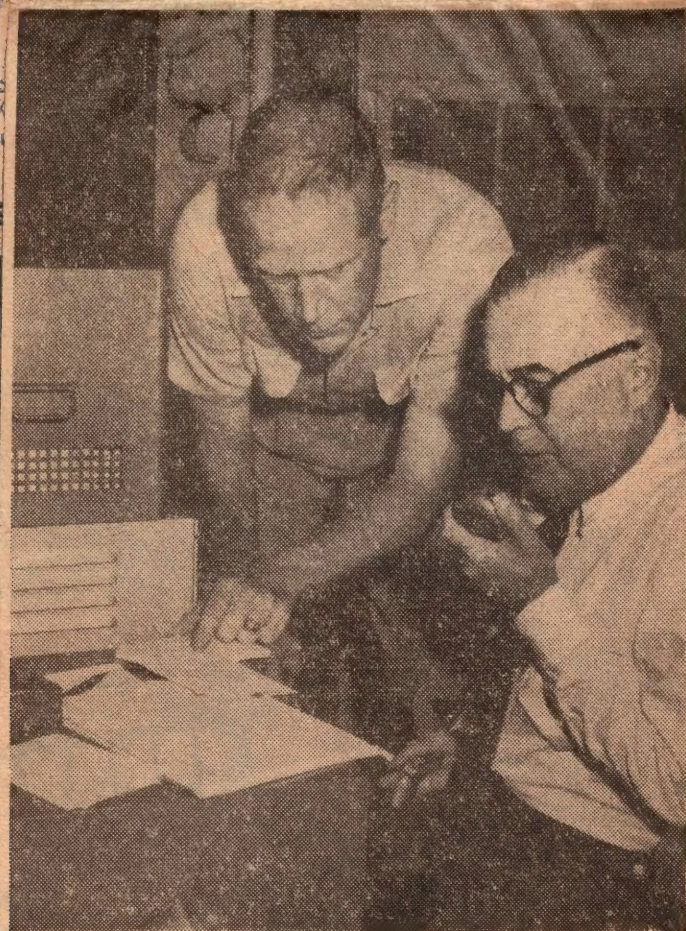
"It's a thing of the future," Schoettlin said. "Someday we hope to have a national hook-up." The alarm could then be dialed from some central place and immediately all Civil Defense posts in the country would be alerted.

Erwin Schoeny, chief engineer at radio station WGBF, said the Conelrad test yesterday afternoon was successful. Conelrad is a method whereby radio stations may continue broadcasting instructions to the people, yet avoid leading any enemy aircraft to the city.

Schoeny said the two stations that participated in the test, WGBF and WEOA, alternated at random — first one would be broadcasting, then the other. Both were broadcasting on 1240. Listeners, however, heard one continuous program.



AT EMERGENCY HOSPITAL—John Harkins, of 1912 Haven-dr, co-ordinator for the "ham operators" and the Civil Defense unit, manned the radio contact set up last night at the emergency hospital in the National Guard Armory.



ORDERS FROM HEADQUARTERS — Civil Defense Director John V. Collins leans over Communications Deputy John Evans in the CD headquarters at Dress Memorial Airport last night to send out orders to communication points throughout the city.



MOBILE RADIO STATION—Orders from CD headquarters were relayed last night through a mobile unit set up at the scene of the "crash" of a mythical H-bomber on the Sports-center site. In foreground of truck loaned for the radio unit by the Army Reserve are Reservists Louis Farlander, with walkie-talkie on left, and James L. Scharr,



As preparations for receiving patients slow and the wait for the first patient begins, Orbie Lewis, manager of the St. Louis and Nashville Freight Lines, and Bert Gardner, representative for Morrow Truck Lines, Inc., talk with Ben Zieg, electrical engineer from Electronics Research Inc.

MORE ABOUT Alert

(Continued from Page One)

control car at Dress Memorial Airport.

"Ham" Operators

Central figures were Al Schoettlin, radio officer in the CD set-up, and John A. Evans, director of communications.

Ham operators whose cars relayed official messages were Faye Gehres, Phil Hatfield, Allen Dale, Walter Johnson, Harvey Denton, Don Harpe, Charles Werry, Henry Galbraith, Robert Fink, Darwin Covert and Fred Sawyer.

After "Applejack" was over, Collins said all reports of the communications volunteers indicated "there can now be no doubt that more sirens are needed for Evansville."

"Some sections of the city could not hear the alert at all," he confirmed.

Controversial Issue

The question of how many sirens the city should have to notify the people of an impending attack has been a controversial issue ever since Mayor H. O. Roberts turned down Collins' request for two additional ones.

The requested appropriation would have given the city five of 11 sirens the federal government has said it needs.

Yesterday's drill was the forerunner of a nation-wide test, which Collins said will be conducted on Monday and Tuesday, June 14 and 15.

But last night, the CD director wasn't sure yet whether Evans-



Although they didn't hear yesterday's air raid signal, three local persons demonstrate what they would have done if it had been audible to them. Kneeling on their car floor are Robert Rosenblatt, 1143 S. Bennighof Ave., son Bobby, 6, and daughter Mary Lou, who yesterday observed her third birthday.

ville will take part in the all-America alert.

"It's too early to say," he reported. "We are still analyzing the results of Saturday's event."

Collins had nothing but praise for the work of volunteers who took part, and said the test "had gone a long way toward bringing a realization home to the people that an attack upon Evansville is a real possibility."

One thing remains for the pub-

lic to do in connection with the test, however.

That is Collins' request for a postal card poll of every citizen. He has asked Vanderburgh residents to notify his office where they heard—or didn't hear—the test siren, and how strongly the signal sounded.

Cards should be addressed to "Civil Defense, Dress Memorial Airport, Evansville."